

***“If today’s naval officers were asked to name the longest uninterrupted naval operations in almost 200 years of military history, few would be able to give the correct answer. It is not well known that for three quarters of a century, through wars, revolutions, and “times of trouble” a flotilla of odd looking ships sailed China’s principle river with a unique singleness of purpose-to protect American lives and property.***

***This was YangPat, the legendary***

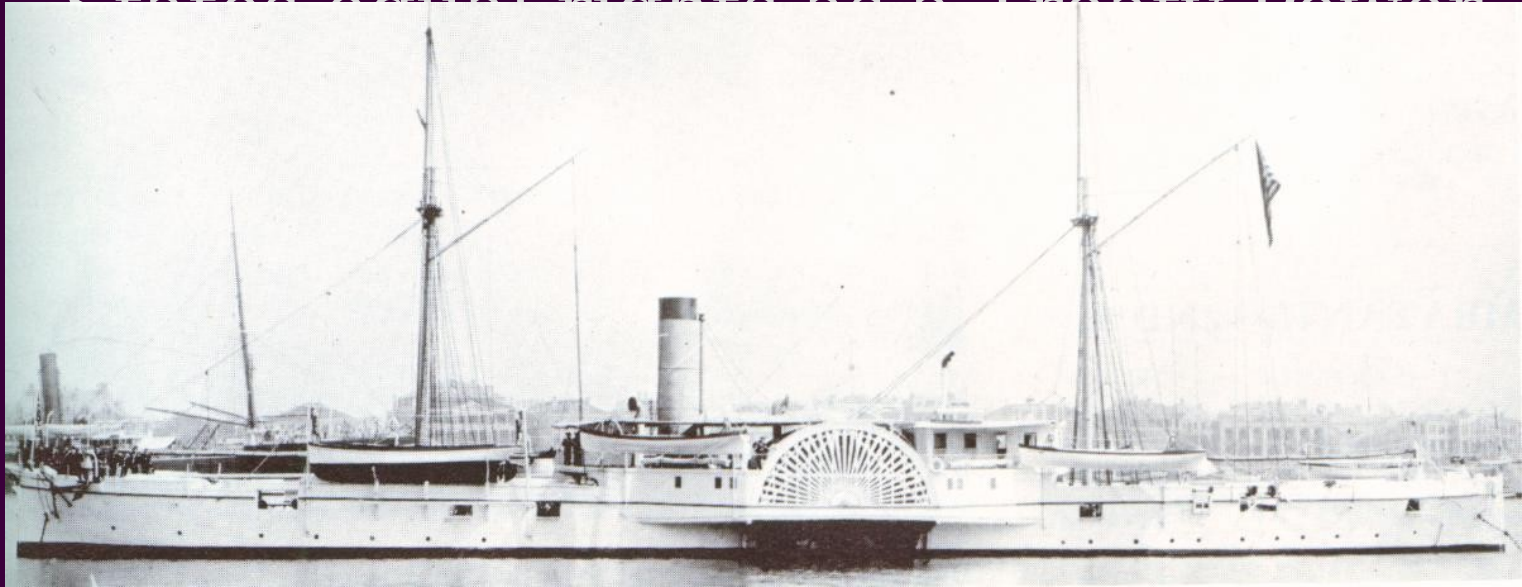
# **The Beginning of Navy Patrols on the Yangtze**

**China was essentially closed to foreign trade and residence up until 1844. Treaties signed after the Opium Wars with Great Britain opened China to foreign trade at a number of locations known as "treaty ports", where foreigners were permitted to live and conduct business. These treaties also established the doctrine of extraterritoriality, a system whereby citizens of foreign countries living in China were subject to the laws of their home country, not those of China. Most favored nation treatment under the treaties assured other countries the privileges afforded Great Britain; as a consequence foreign commerce**



**“The handling of a ship in the river gorges is a hair raising experience for a commanding officer on his first trip. In one or two of the rapids the current is fast enough to make a 13-knot ship lose headway and sometimes go astern. The reader may imagine the feeling of a captain coming down the river for the first time in these same rapids when the pilot heads straight for a large rocky obstruction on the side of the gorge with water boiling all around it, and then turns the ship just in time to clear the stern by about 10 feet with the ship going at about 16 knots. A ship more than 150 feet long cannot make the turns necessary in the gorges..., even if it is equipped with four rudders as was the PALOS.”**

**MONOCACY (I)** and the **ASHUELOT** were the first two ships sent specifically for river duty, in 1866, to protect American interests along the Yangtze. Their presence was legalized by the Sino-British Treaty of 1858 allowing the United States equal rights as a Treaty Power.



USS MONOCACY (I) commissioned in 1866. She was nicknamed “jinricksha of the Navy “ and served 37 years in the Far East. In 1903 she was decommissioned and sold.

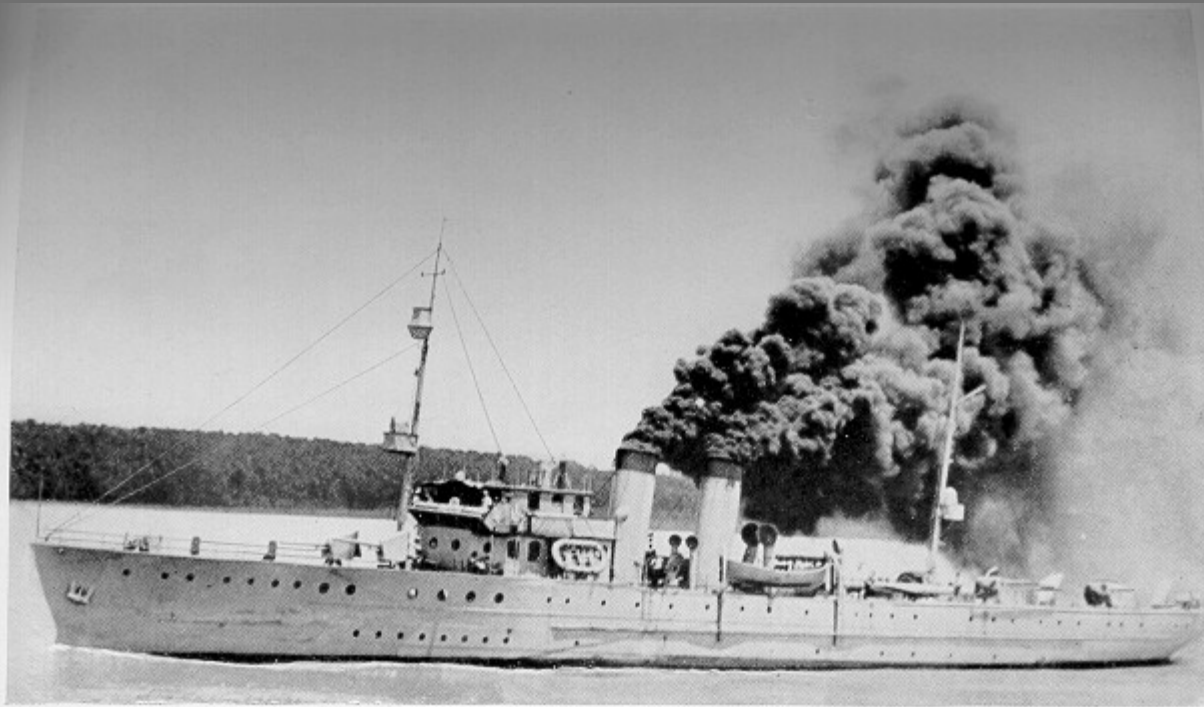


<http://www.spanam.simplenet.com>

Hat band from the MONOCACY (1)



***“...On 28 August 1926 she (VILLALOBOS) ran aground. While elsewhere in the Fleet such an incident would be grounds for a court-martial, in China the frequent capricious currents and changing river levels frequently resulted in such nautical mishaps.”***



*Courtesy Office of Naval Records and Library, Navy Department*

U.S.S. ISABEL

The *Isabel* was formerly flagship of the Yangtze River Patrol Force. She was being built at the Bath Iron Works when we entered the war and was taken over by the government. She was assigned to patrol duty in 1921.

# USS ISABEL

Commissioned  
December 28,  
1917

Decommissioned  
February 11,  
1946

Former yacht ,  
rumored sold to  
the Navy for one  
dollar, converted  
to a destroyer.

Served as  
flagship for the  
Yangtze Patrol

US Naval Institute Proceedings

The black smoke from the ships  
became apart of the Yangtze  
landscape.



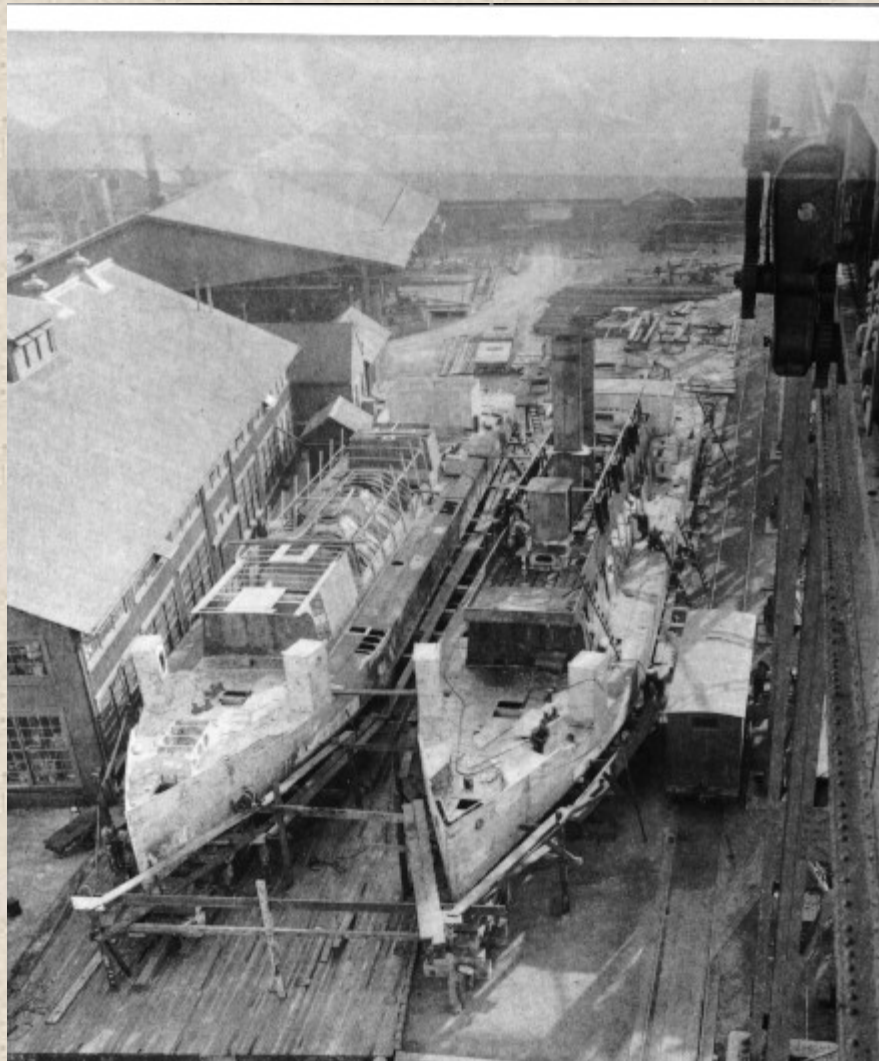
# **December 25, 1919**

## **Yangtze River Patrol Formally Organized**

**The first ComYangPat was  
Captain A. Kearney, USN**

**The MONOCACY (II) and the PALOS were  
the first two specially designed draft  
gunboats to join the patrol. They were  
lighter, more powerful, and had four rudders  
with a shallow draft which made them  
better able to navigate the waters of the  
mighty river. In 1924 six new Yangtze  
gunboats were authorized, as most of the  
patrol were ex-Spanish gunboats captured**

# USS MONOCACY (II) and the USS PALOS

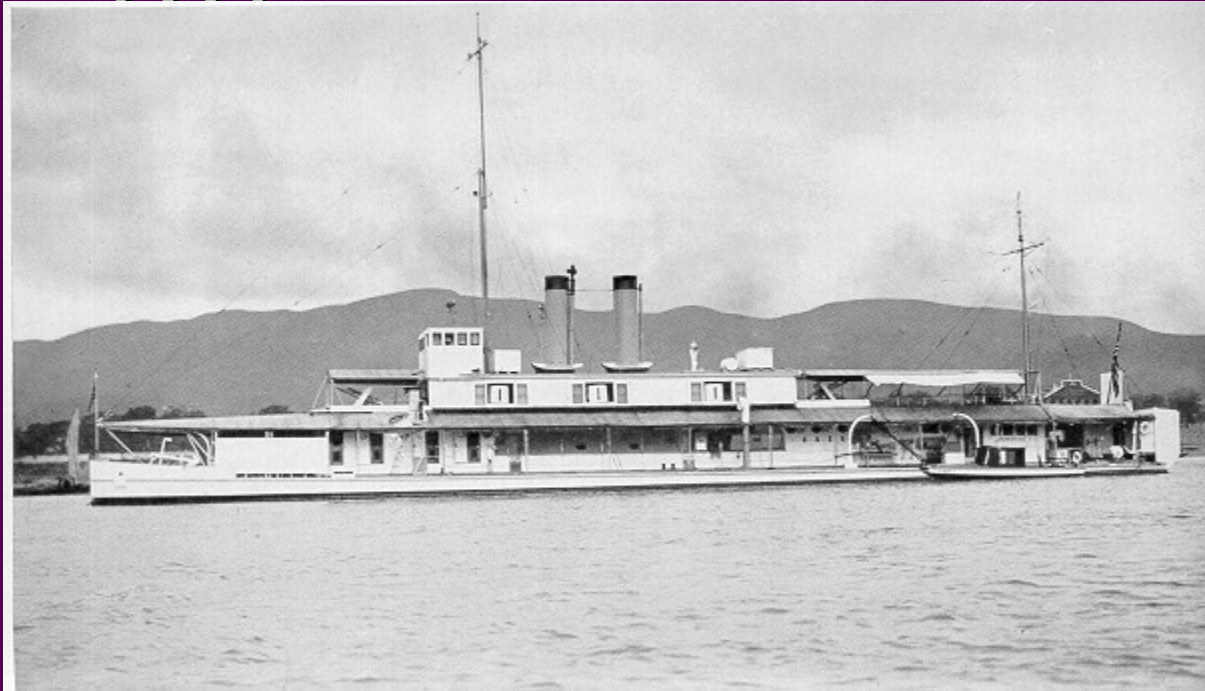


The first of eight ships to be specially built service on the Yangtze River.

Shown here in 1912, as they were built side by side in Mare Island Navy Yard, then disassembled, shipped to China, where they were reassembled, and commissioned on June 24, 1914. Neither ship would ever make it back to the U.S.

# USS MONOCACY

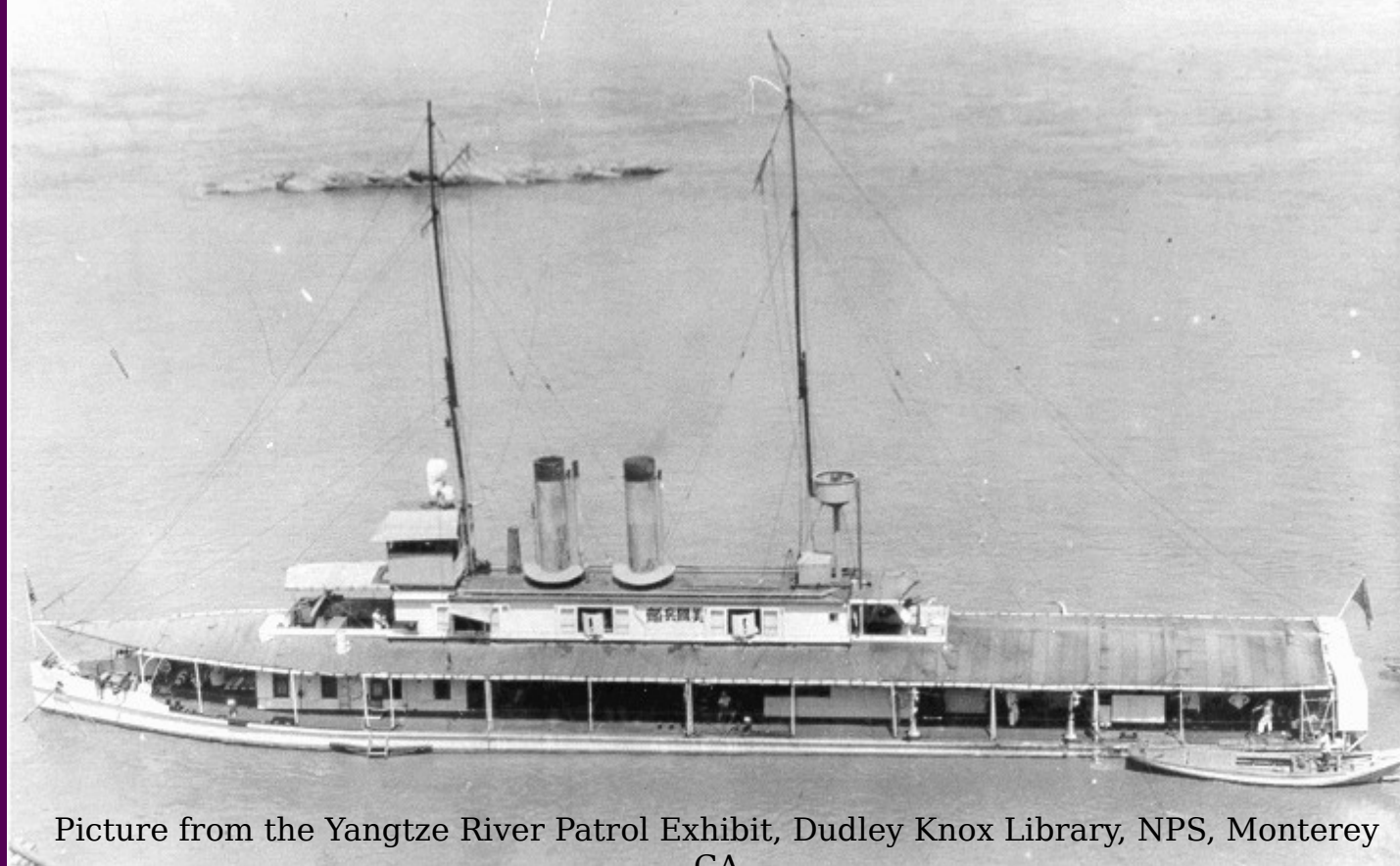
(TT)



Proceedings of the US Naval Institute

Patrolling the waters of the Yangtze River  
Decommissioned at Shanghai January 31, 1939  
She was sunk in the China Sea

# USS PALOS



Picture from the Yangtze River Patrol Exhibit, Dudley Knox Library, NPS, Monterey  
CA

## The PALOS at Chungking

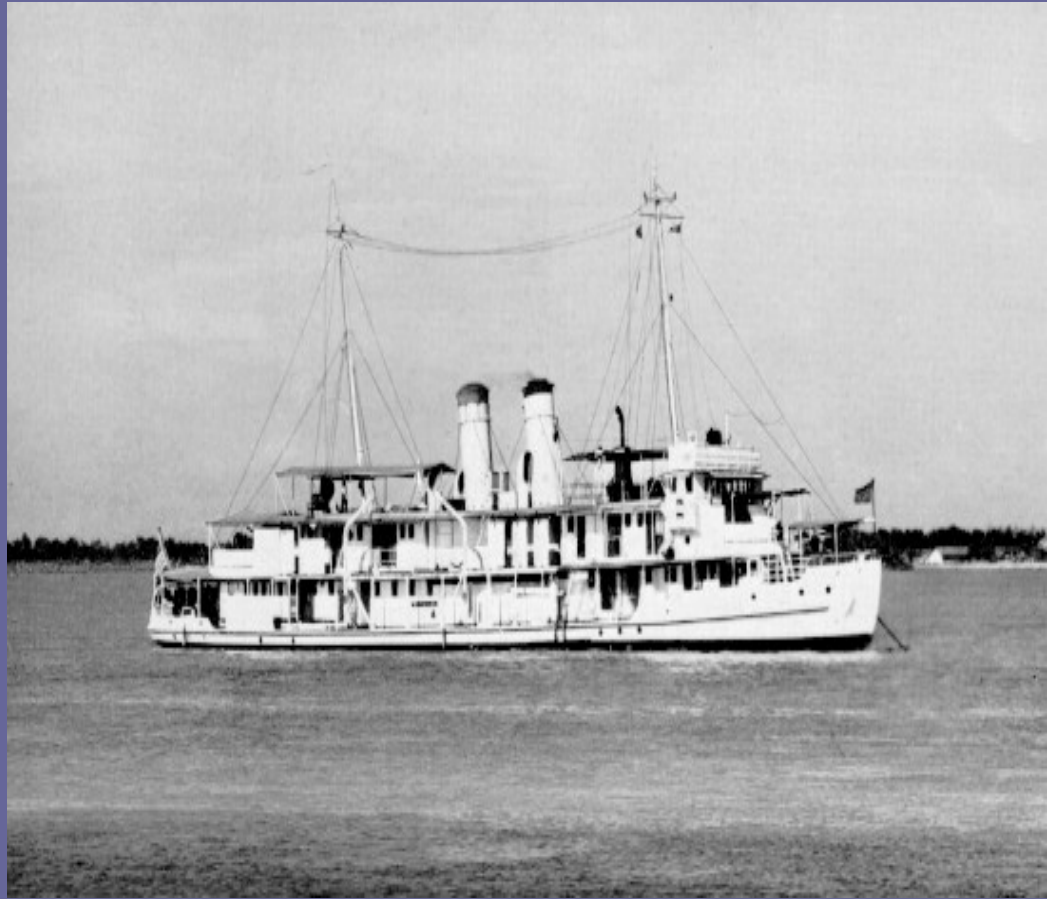
One of the first warships built specifically to navigate the treacherous waters of the Yangtze and the first (U.S. warship) to reach Chungking, 1300 miles from the sea, on August 28, 1914. After patrolling the Yangtze for 23 years she was decommissioned on May 21, 1937 and sold



# USS GUAM

The USS GUAM , was commissioned on December 28, 1927 and renamed the WAKE on January 23, 1941. She patrolled the Yangtze under the US flag until 1941. In Shanghai on December 8, after a failed scuttle attempt, she was captured by the Japanese. The only American man-of-war to be captured intact by the enemy during World War II. After the surrender of

*Dictionary of American Fighting Ships.*



Proceeding of the United States Naval Institute

One of two smaller ships built for the service on the Yangtze river.

# USS TUTUILA sister ship of the GUAM



USS TUTUILA, CHUNGKING

o from the Yangtze River Patrol Exhibit

The USS TUTUILA was Commissioned on March 2, 1928. One time, while on patrol, she was fired on by warlord troops. The warlord explained that his men were only “country boys” who meant no harm. The CO of the ship commented that he too had some country boys and noted that he had seen them tinkering with the aft 3 inch gun, pointing it at the warlords headquarters, the sniping suddenly stopped.

The TUTUILA was stranded in Chungking after Japanese forces captured Hankow. After the fall of Hankow the Japanese turned their attention to Chungking stepping up air attacks. On July 30, 1941 the TUTUILA was attacked by Japanese planes . The Japanese quickly apologized for the accident. With no way to travel down the river her crew



“The typical old Yangtze sailor, the “river rat”, was too pleased with his lot to allow himself to become a disciplinary problem of any consequence and thus run the risk of being shipped “outside”.”

*Kemp Tolley, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.)*

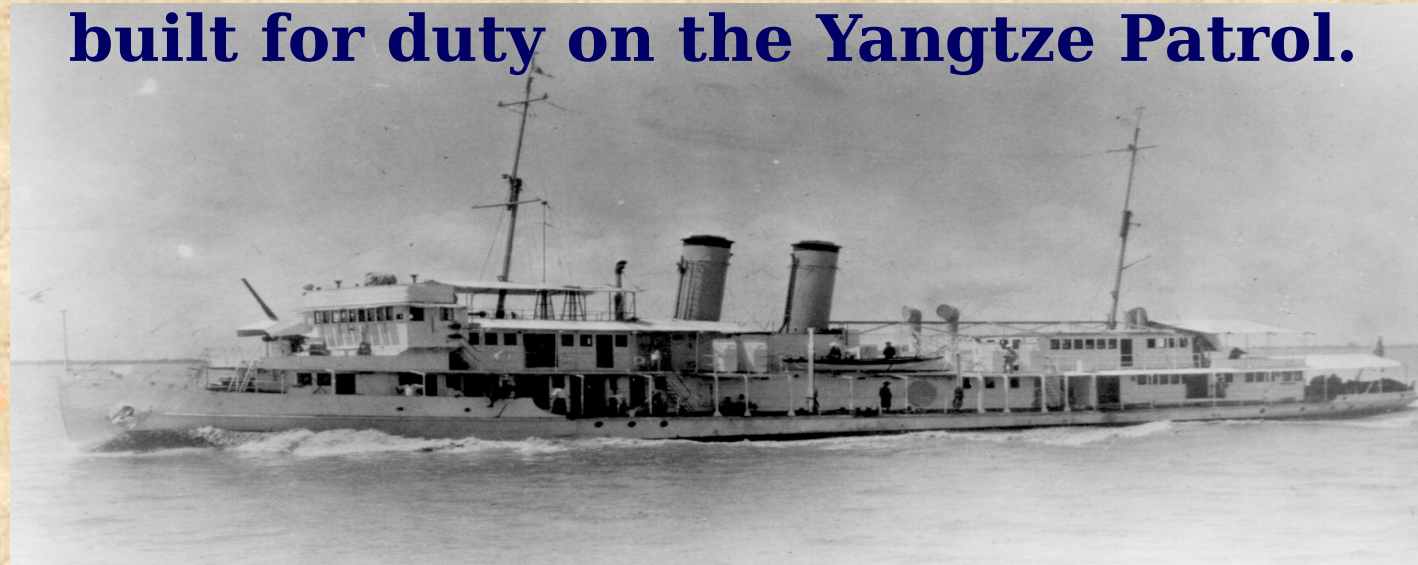


# USS PANAY

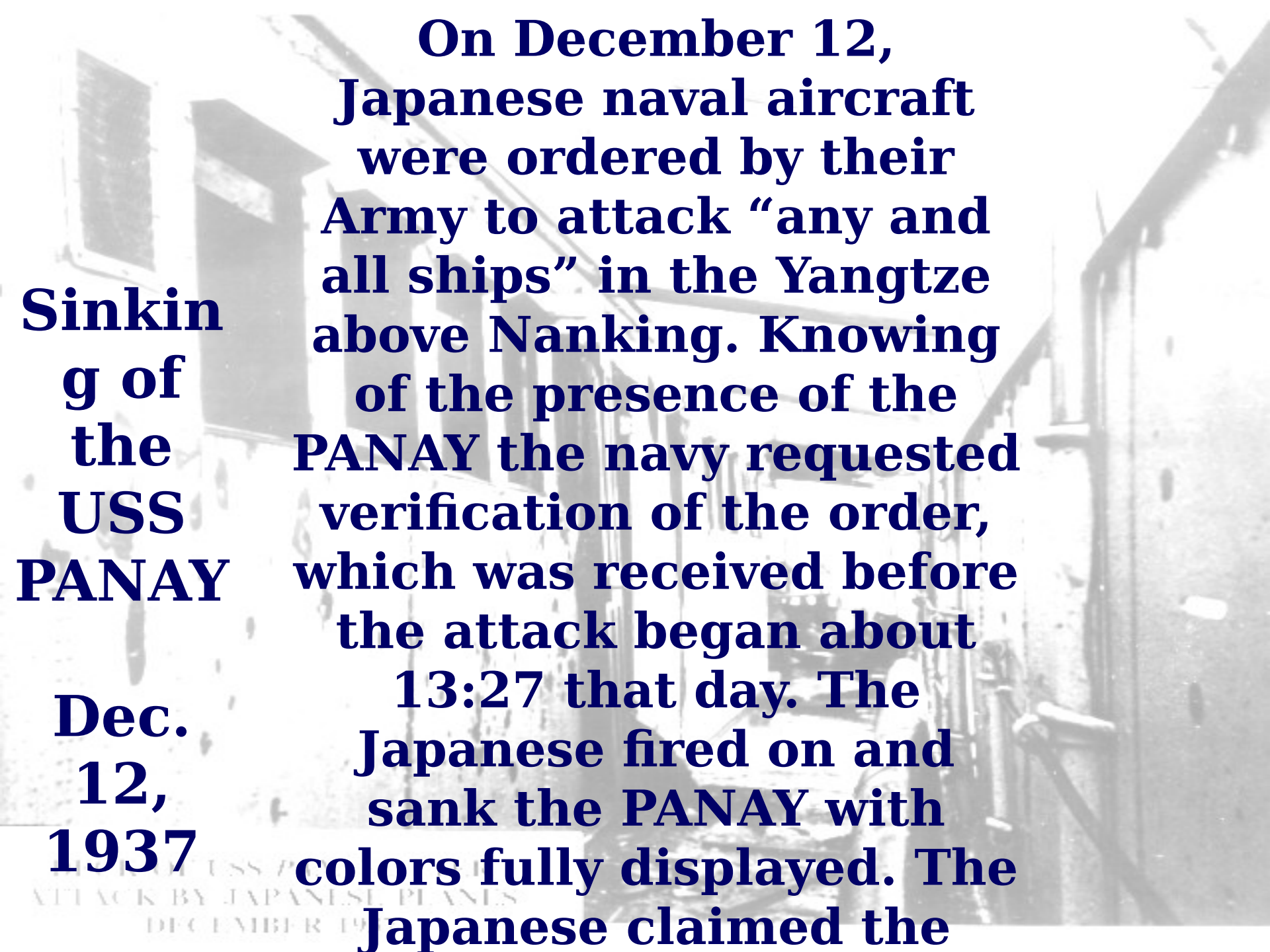
1928

One of two medium sized ships built for Yangtze service. The USS PANAY was commissioned September 10, 1928. Named for an island of the Philippines, she was built for duty on the Yangtze Patrol.

Patrol Craft  
Displacement 450 tons  
Length 191'1"  
Beam 28'1"  
Draft 5'3"  
Speed 15 knots  
Armament  
2x1 3 inch/50  
10x1 .30 cal AA  
Complement 65  
Reciprocating  
engine twin screws



“While on the patrol she was routinely fired upon by Chinese bandits and warlords. The ship’s commanding officer wrote, “Firing on gunboats and merchant ships have(sic) become so routine that any vessel traversing the Yangtze River, sails with the expectation of being fired upon..fortunately, the Chinese appear to be rather poor marksmen and the ship has, so far, not

The background of the slide is a faded, black and white photograph of the USS Panay, a transport ship, viewed from the side. The ship's hull and upper decks are visible, though the image is intentionally faded to serve as a backdrop for the text.

# **Sinkin g of the USS PANAY**

**Dec.  
12,  
1937**

**On December 12,  
Japanese naval aircraft  
were ordered by their  
Army to attack “any and  
all ships” in the Yangtze  
above Nanking. Knowing  
of the presence of the  
PANAY the navy requested  
verification of the order,  
which was received before  
the attack began about  
13:27 that day. The  
Japanese fired on and  
sank the PANAY with  
colors fully displayed. The  
Japanese claimed the**

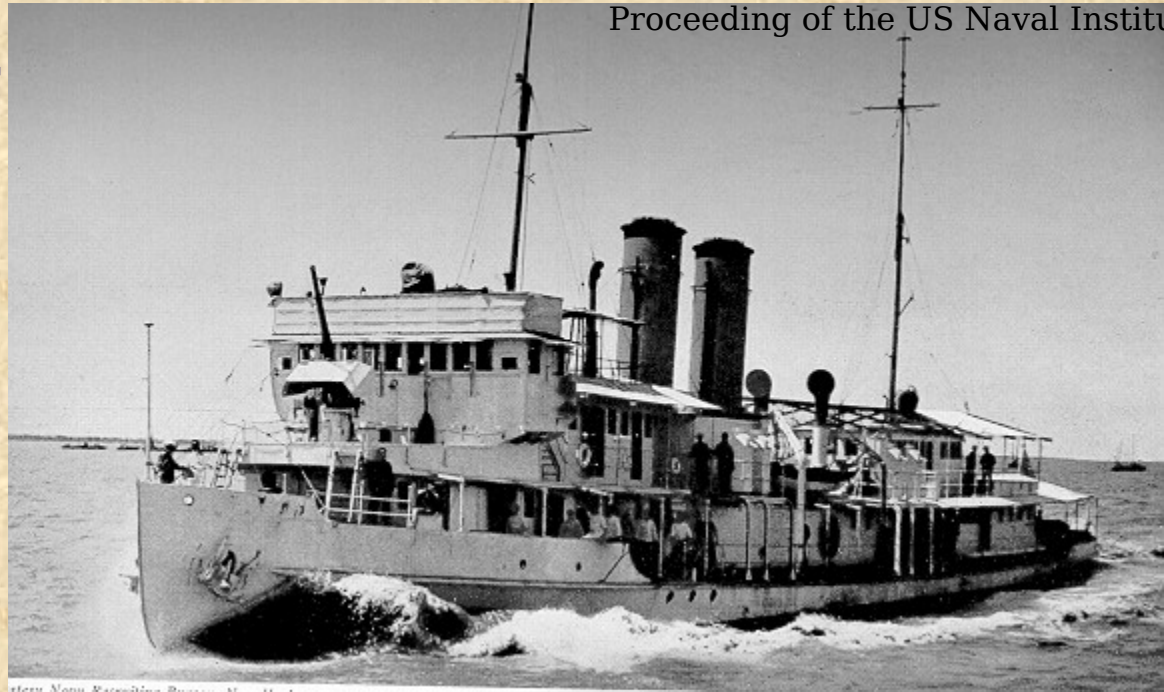


# USS OAHU

Sister ship of the PANAMA

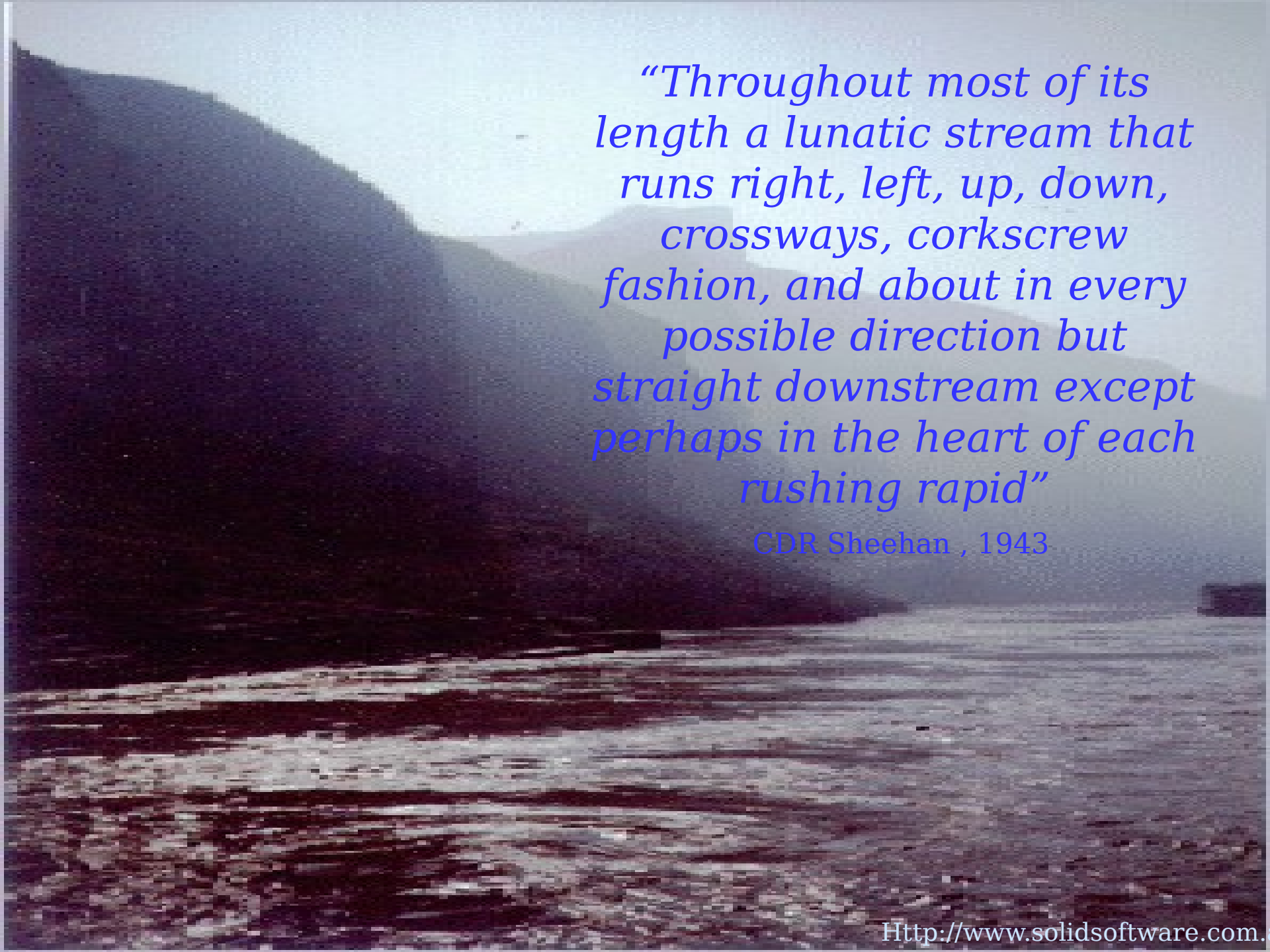
Commissioned  
October 22, 1928 the  
OAHU  
participated in regular  
Yangtze River duties  
such as escorting  
foreign  
and American  
merchantmen  
up and down the river,  
supplying armed  
guards to

U S and British  
rivercraft,  
landing blue-jackets at  
treaty  
ports threatened with



Proceeding of the US Naval Institute

Escaping China in November 1941, she  
sailed the open sea to Manila where  
she operated until she was sunk by  
enemy gunfire on May 5, 1942 off of  
the island of Corregidor



*“Throughout most of its length a lunatic stream that runs right, left, up, down, crossways, corkscrew fashion, and about in every possible direction but straight downstream except perhaps in the heart of each rushing rapid”*

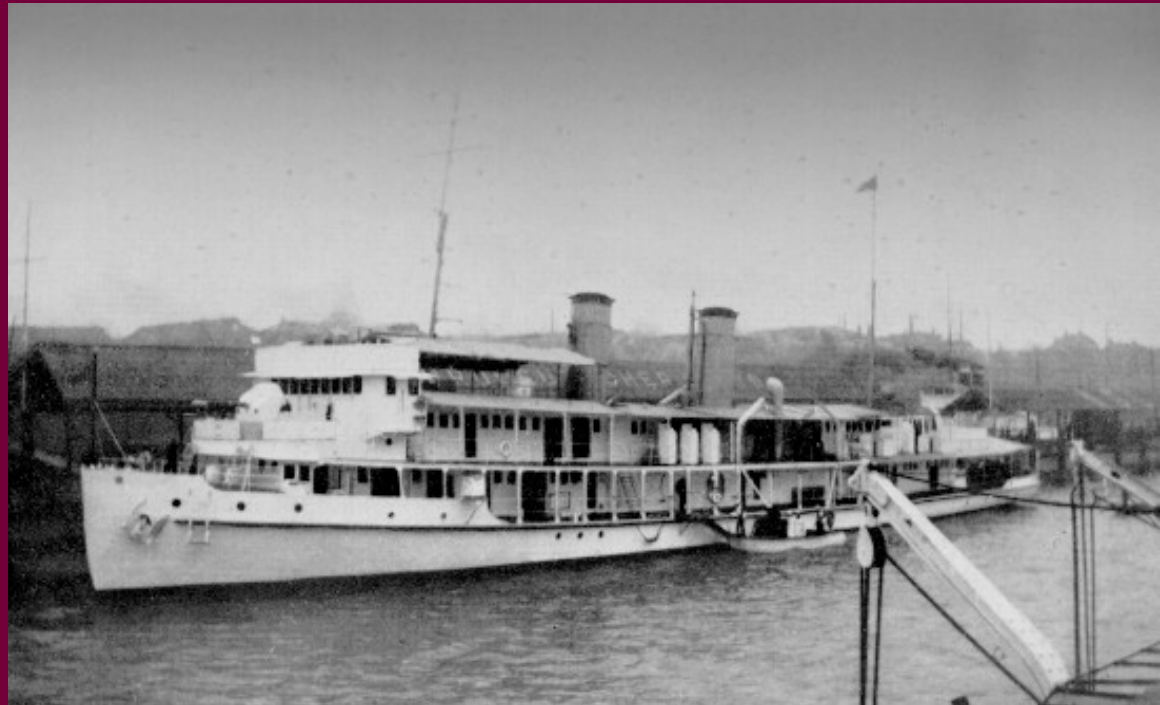
CDR Sheehan , 1943

The USS LUZON was commissioned on June 1, 1928 and served as the flag ship for the patrol until 1938. She escaped out of China in 1941, and although not built for open seas, she made it safely to Manila. The LUZON conducted patrol operations in the Philippines until May 6, 1942 when she was scuttled in Manila Bay to prevent capture. Salvaged by the Japanese, she was renamed the *Karatsu*. After two years of

Dictionary of American Fighting Ships, Vol. , 1981.

# USS LUZON

One of two of the largest of the Riverboats to be built in Shanghai

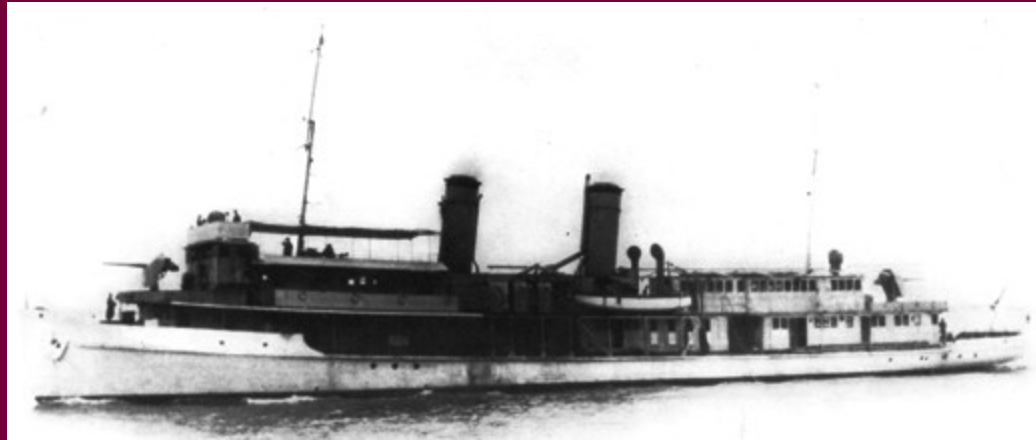


US Naval Institute Proceedings



# USS MINDANAO

## sister ship of the LUZON



[metalab.unc.edu/hyperwar/USN/ships/PR/PR-8\\_Mindanao.html](http://metalab.unc.edu/hyperwar/USN/ships/PR/PR-8_Mindanao.html)

Commissioned July 10, 1928

She served on the Yangtze protecting American interests and suppressing piracy until December 4, 1941 when she was ordered to the Philippines. En route, on December 9th, she intercepted a Japanese tanker and took ten prisoners, the first taken by Americans in World War II.

After arriving in the Philippines she patrolled off the coast near Corregidor until her crew was ordered ashore to help defend Fort Hugheson, the MINDANAO was

# Yangtze Service Battle Streamer



Yangtze Service  
Medal

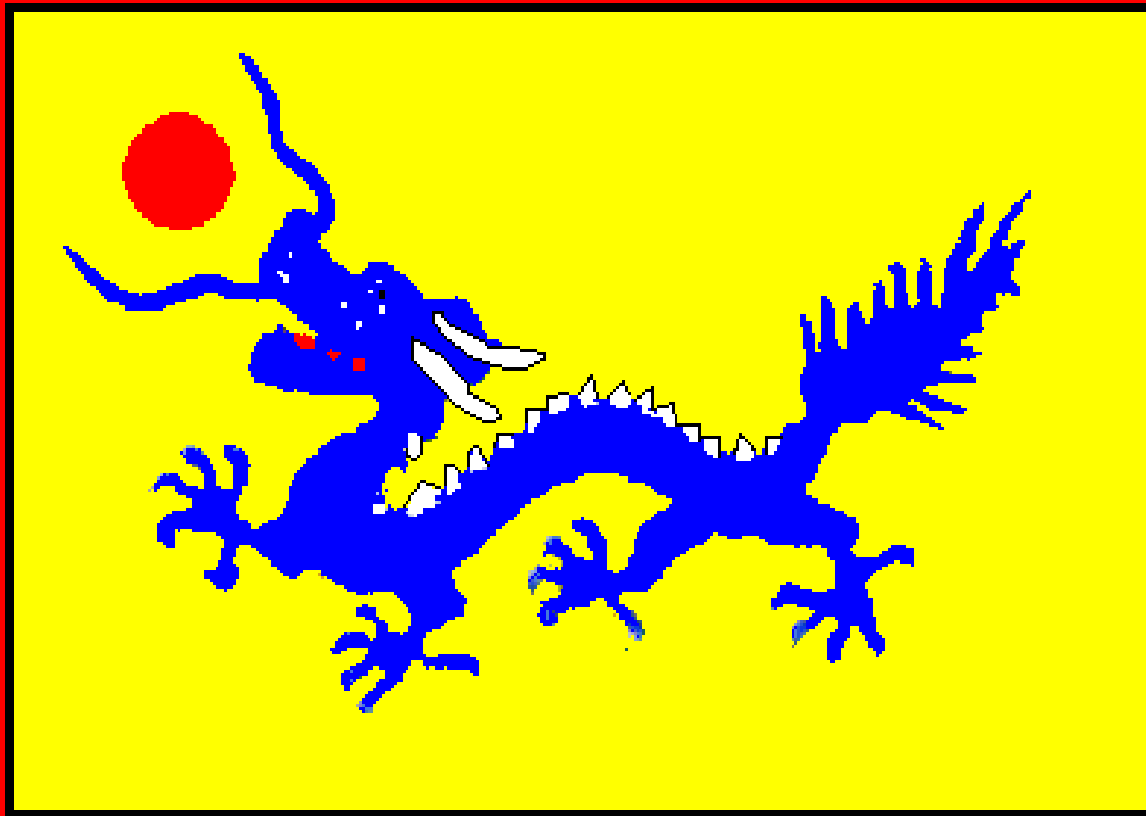
Navy streamers are 3 feet long and 2 3/4 inches wide. The coloring and designs of the streamers are the same as the ribbon from which the medal is suspended. The Navy's battle streamers total 27. Like the Marine Corps, the Navy flies a

# *“YangPat was dead”*

Kemp Tolley, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.)

In anticipation of Japanese aggression, orders were given to the Captains of the ships; “they should preserve the personnel and ships by leaving for the Philippines and if that could not be done then to inflict the greatest possible damage to disable the ships.”.

On November 18, 1941 CinCAF recommended to OpNav to immediately remove the gunboats. On November 29 after frantic preparation, and although designed only for river travel, the gunboats started to leave China toward open sea. On December 8 the unit designation disappeared and U.S. Navy



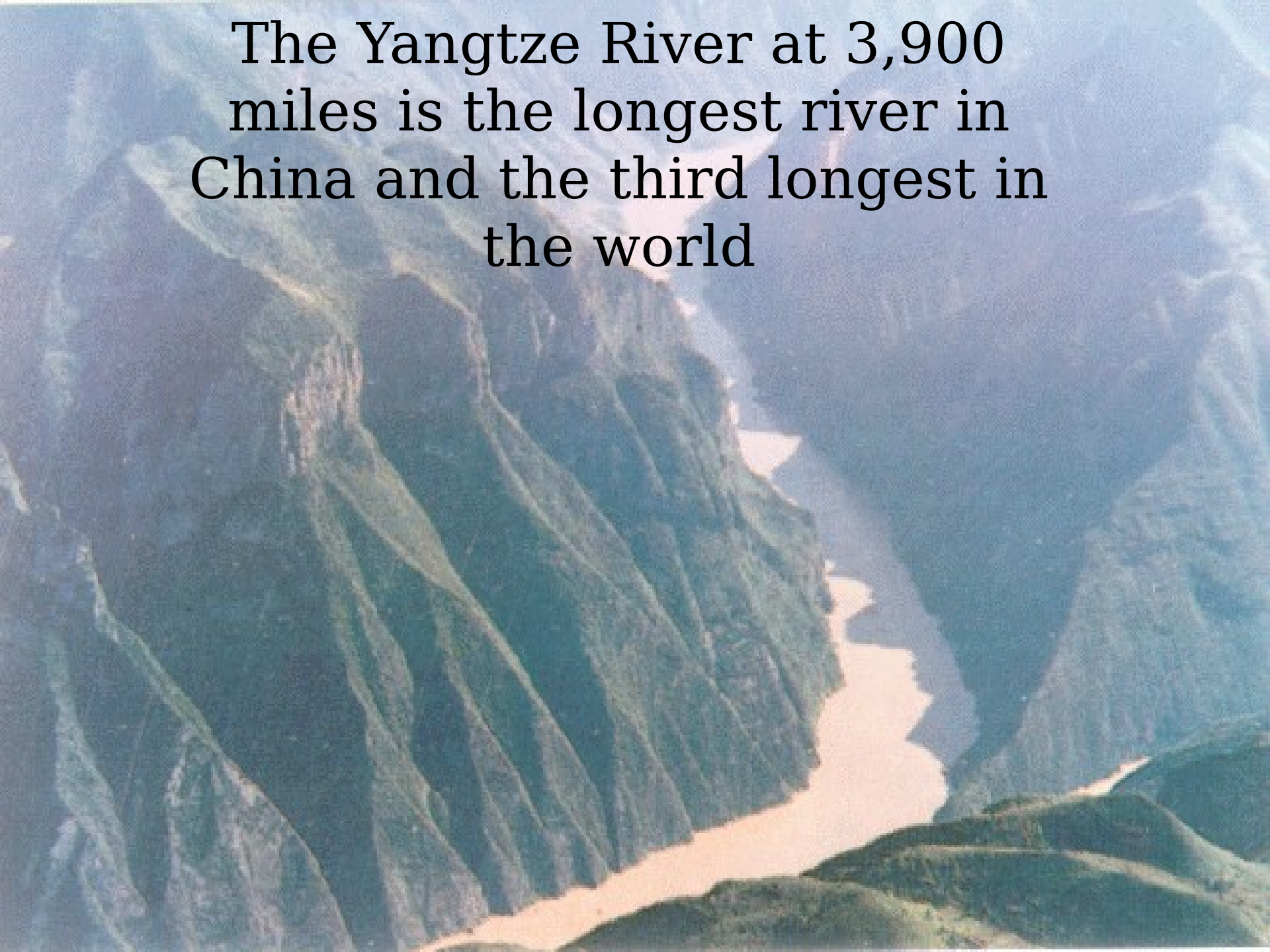
The Qing, C'hing or Manchu Empire banner  
was used by China as a national flag  
from 1890 until 1912



Yangtze River



The Yangtze River at 3,900 miles is the longest river in China and the third longest in the world





[www.china-guide.com](http://www.china-guide.com)



Qutang Gorge



[www.compusmart.ab.ca](http://www.compusmart.ab.ca)



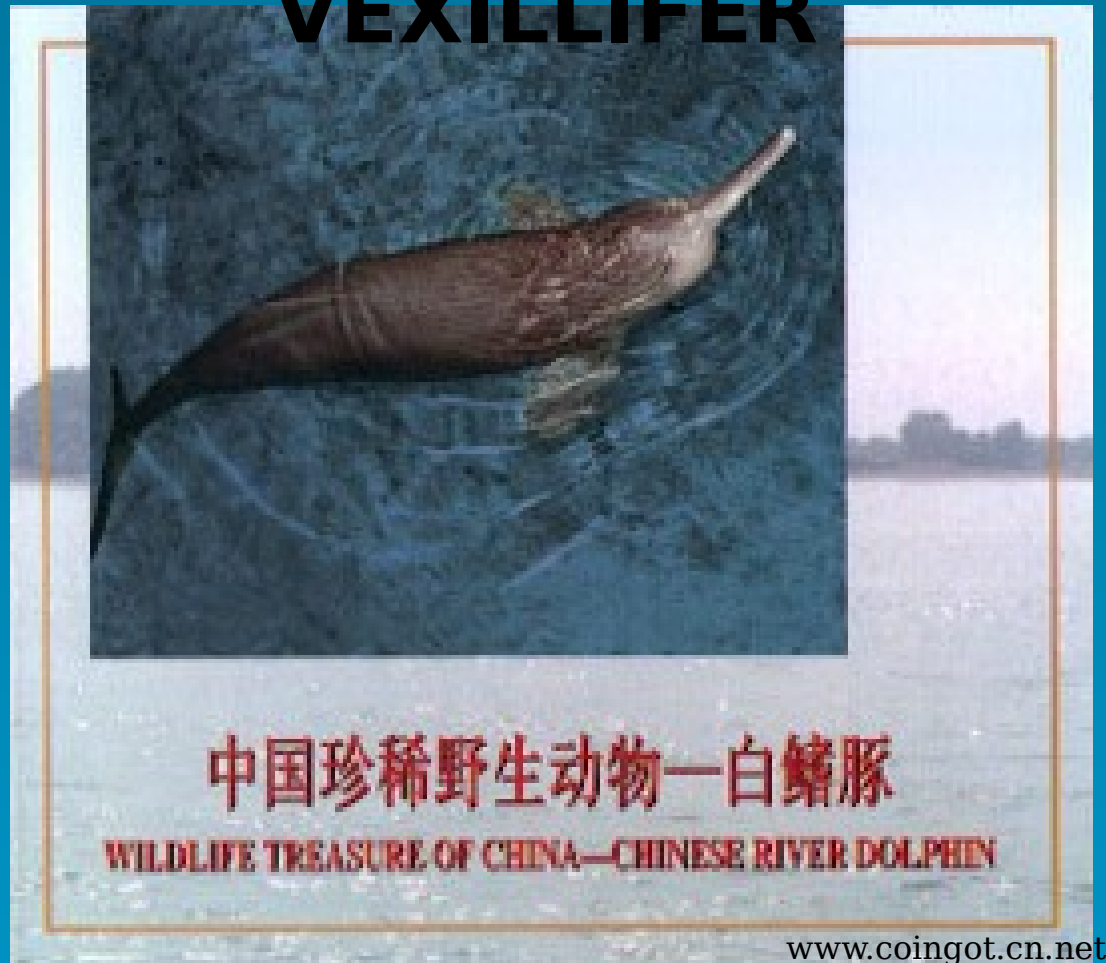
[www.discovery.com](http://www.discovery.com)

# Life on the Yangtze



The town of Ziguinchor  
in the Xiling Gorge

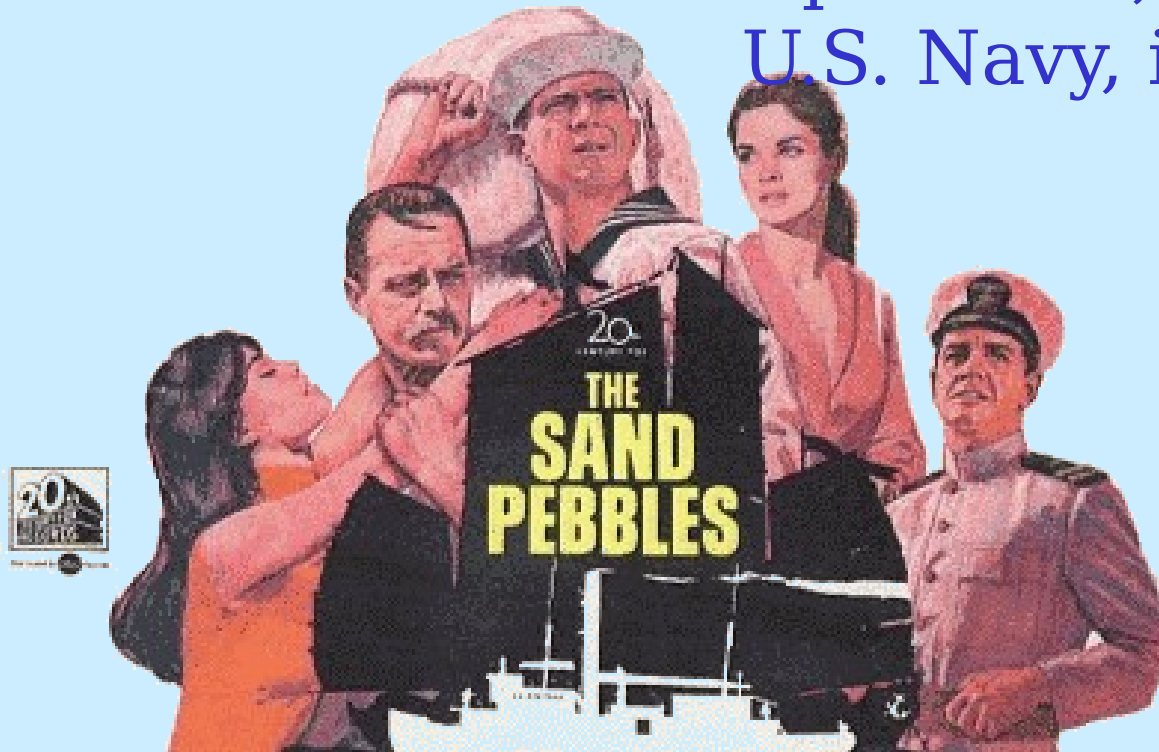
# LIPOTES VEXILLIFER



Commonly called the Baiji, the Yangtze River Dolphin is the most endangered aquatic mammal in

Director/Producer  
Robert Wise

***Sand Pebbles*** was  
written by Richard  
McKenna  
and based on  
his personal  
experience, with the  
U.S. Navy, in China

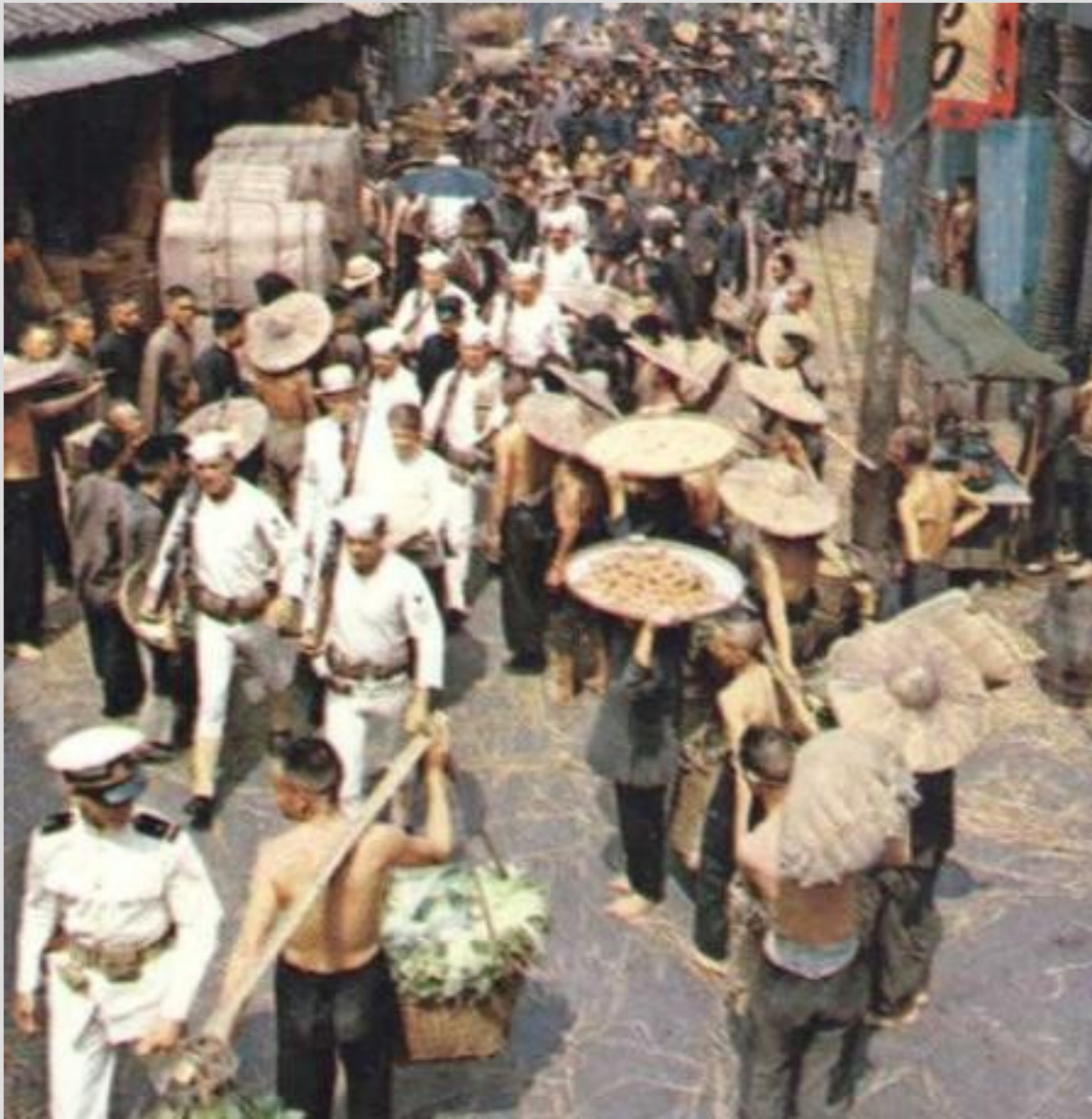




*Sand Pebbles* stars Steve McQueen. His performance in the movie won him his first and only nomination for Best Actor.



Nominate  
d for 8  
Academy  
Awards  
1966







The “San Pablo,” constructed for the movie Sand Pebbles, cost \$250,000 making it one of the costliest props at the time.